

horizon. When only a thin ridge of earth remained, a boat with an officer on board was propelled against it, and breaking through the slight barrier descended with the rush of water into the canal. The Governor of Cairo flung a purse of gold into the boat as it passed. Formerly the custom was to throw money into the canal. The populace used to dive after it, and several lives were generally lost in the scramble.<sup>1</sup> This practice also would seem to have been ancient, for Seneca tells us that at a place called the Veins of the Nile, not far from Philae, the priests used to cast money and offerings of gold into the river at a festival which apparently took place at the rising of the water.<sup>2</sup> At Cairo the time-honoured ceremony came to an end in 1897, when the old canal was filled up. An electric tramway now runs over the spot where for countless ages crowds of worshippers or holiday-makers had annually assembled to witness the marriage of the Nile.<sup>3</sup>

### § 3. Rites of Sowing

The next great operation of the agricultural year. In The sowing Egypt is the sowing of the seed in November, when the s<sup>d</sup> In water of the inundation has retreated from the fields. With November, the Egyptians, as with many peoples of antiquity, the committing of the seed to the earth assumed the character of a solemn and mournful rite. On this subject I will let Plutarch Plutarch speak for himself. "What," he asks, "are we to mournful ma<sup>e</sup> of the gloomy, joyless, and mournful sacrifices, if it is character wrong either to omit the established rites or to confuse and

of sowing, disturb our conceptions of the  
 gods by absurd suspicions ?  
 For the Greeks also perform many rites  
 which resemble  
 those of the Egyptians and are observed  
 about the same  
 time. Thus at the festival of the  
 Thesmophoria in Athens

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Lane, *op. dt.* pp. 500-504; is mentioned by  
 Diodorus Siculus  
 Sir Auckland Colvin, *The Making of* (i. 36. 3), and the  
 festival on that  
*Modern Egypt* (London, 1906), pp. occasion (rd  
 Karaxur<sup>^</sup>pia) is noticed  
 278<sup>^</sup>. According to the latter writer, by Endoxus (or one  
 of his pupils)  
 a dressed dummy was thrown into the in a passage which has  
 already been.  
 river at each cutting of the dam. quoted. See above, p. 35,  
 note<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Seneca, *Naturales Qztaestiones*,  
 iv. 2. 7. The cutting of the dams <sup>3</sup> Sir Auckland  
 Colvin, *I.e.*